



Elizabeth Burmaster
State Superintendent

DPI VISTA Monthly

April 2006

*We have too many high sounding words, and too few actions
that correspond with them.*

-Abigail Adams

Online newsletters: <http://dpi.wi.gov/fscp/vnwsltrhm.html>



Jane Grinde
Project Director
Kari Nelson
Program Assistant
Stephanie Hogue
VISTA Leader
Megan O'Connell
DPI VISTA

In April we have a big conference on the 5th and 6th that will be held in Madison, at the Concourse hotel. Since this will be the first two day conference we've had in awhile, don't miss this opportunity to bond with your fellow VISTAs. After the conferences events on the 5th, informal gathering spaces will be open for VISTAs to congregate and chat about their year so far.



Remember:
April showers
Bring May
Flowers!



Updated Interview Schedule

May: Megan O'Connell and Julie McGonigal

June: Karen Collins and Krista Larson

July: Kathryn Zboralski and Lisa Fusco

Sites to See

Health fun

Enter your food intake and activities to calculate calories consumed and burned.

<http://www.mypyramidtracker.gov>

School Resources

This site has links for school subjects so kids can get help with their studies. They have a good foreign language link.

www.aboutschool.com

Fun Help with Schoolwork

This upbeat site has links for teachers, students, and parents. There are even lots of learning games to play.

<http://school.discovery.com/>

Looking for Educational Online Games?

This site is just for educational games!

www.funschool.com/

Available Grants

Do Something \$500 grants

Each fall and spring Do Something gives grants of \$500 each to ten young people who submit creative proposals for solving local problems. Proposals should be in the areas of community building, health or environment. Deadline: May 15, 2006

http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/rfp_item.jhtml?id=133600005

National Crime Prevention Council awarding 100 grants of \$500 for service learning projects

The grants will support service-learning projects planned and implemented by youth who identify needs and create projects to address or prevent crime, violence, and drug abuse in their schools and communities. These grants are intended to encourage and promote crime prevention, community service, and civic responsibility. Deadline: June 1, 2006

http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/rfp_item.jhtml?id=133500037

YouthActionNet to Help Fund Youth-Led Social Change Projects [YouthActionNet](#) will present awards to youth leaders and emerging projects that promote social change and connect youth with local communities. To be eligible for an award, youth-led projects should have clearly defined goals and the potential for growth or further replication. Award recipients will receive \$500.

Deadline: April 15, 2006

http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/rfp_item.jhtml?id=127600024



Seasonal Events

7 Oshkosh - Winefeast Silent Auction and Raffle.

Wine and Beer Tasting of more than 250 wines, domestic and imported beers, non-alcoholic beverages and tasty cuisine from 22 area restaurants. Taste Special "Cellar Select" and "Premium" wines from 6 - 7 pm. Tickets will be available in advance and at the door. Event starts at 6:00PM and ends at 10:00PM. For more information call 920-233-1414.

15 Oshkosh - Easter Egg Hunt

Families can check out fire engines, squad cars and ambulances or bounce around in the two jumpy castles, meet McGruff the Crime Dog and the Easter Bunny or get their face painted. South Park on Ohio St. Event starts at 9:00AM. For more information call (920) 729-3883.

19 Appleton - Pilobolus

They are one of the most innovative modern dance troupes in the nation, taking their name from a sun-loving fungus found in barnyards that can shoot its spore bag over a cow. The dances they perform are marked with striking narrative imagery and impossible athletic feats that will have the audience reeling from the sight of what can only be described as moving human sculptures. Fox Cities Performing Arts Center. For more information call 920-730-3760.

23 Madison - AWA Breakfast on the Farm

8am - Noon. Full Breakfast and ice cream sundaes. Petting Zoo, educational activities, and an appearance by Bucky Badger. Entertainment with Cloggers and a Polka Band. West Madison Agricultural Research Station. Event starts at 8:00AM and ends at 12:00PM. For more information call (608) 231-3702.



Money Saving Tip of the Month

When big holidays that mainly involve candy come along, wait until the day before the event to shop. By then many places will have things on a 50% off sale. And if you are really on top of it, shop the day after for items that you can use next year like baskets, plastic grass, and plastic eggs. And if there are really adorable items that you want, hold off until the day after when you can get them at a great sale price. Often you can find everyday items like socks, flower pots, hand towels, bowls, and other things with a holiday theme for very cheap after the holiday. And when you are going the frugal way, a pair of socks is a pair of socks no matter what is on them! And for half the price of other socks, I think they look great all year round!



Action Team Corner: Bringing the Community In

This monthly column attempts to answer questions and offer ideas for starting and growing a successful Family-School-Community Partnership Action Team.

Individuals and organizations active in your community can bring a vast array of rich learning opportunities to schoolchildren. Involving the community in your school's learning mission is a gradual process that requires flexibility and the willingness to match needs with resources. Following, are some steps action teams can take to welcome community members' contributions to schools.

1. **Work Together from the Start.** Involve a wide variety of community groups and individuals when you first begin planning partnership activities. Contributors will feel a sense of ownership in the partnerships by choosing how to respond to the education issues that most interest or affect them.
2. **Assess Needs.** Invite community members and the action team to complete a resource map or a community-friendly checklist with questions such as
 - What barriers exist to children and families in our community? How can they be overcome?
 - How can families and community groups help students in every classroom meet high standards?
 - What can we do as a community to help students who need extra assistance?
 - What steps need to be taken so all children in our community read well by the end of Grade 3, succeed in math by the end of Grade 8, think about and prepare for post-high school education and work, and benefit from after-school and summer enrichment programs?
 - What can we do as a community to strengthen high schools and help more teenagers get and stay on track?
3. **Identify Networks.** What cultures, languages, faith groups, ages, business sectors, education institutions, and cultural organizations are represented? Identify people or groups who link your action team and school to networks in your community. How can these networkers be part of your partnership efforts?
4. **Explore Resources.** Can local colleges or senior citizen groups supply tutors? Can local businesses offer volunteers or provide employees leave time to help schools? Can the hospital, art gallery, or museum offer cultural activities for children during or after school?
5. **Share Information.** Ask community representatives of national organizations and associations if they have materials, activities, or grants that can be used by your school. Share this information with teachers, parents, the principal, and your action team.
6. **Seek Out Experienced Collaborators.** Are there people in your community or region experienced in building coalitions? Ask them to give a presentation on building community partnerships. Provide attendees and your action team with examples of successful partnerships.



Recipe of the Month

Peach Cake

- ½ c. butter flavored Crisco
- ½ c. sugar
- ½ t. lemon extract (or ½ t. lemon zest if you prefer)
- ½ t. almond extract
- 2 eggs
- 1 c. flour
- 1 t. baking powder
- ½ t. salt
- 2-3 cups sliced fresh peaches

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease an 8x8 pan.
2. Cream Crisco and sugar. Stir in the extracts and then beat in eggs, one at a time.
3. Mix flour, baking powder and salt together. Stir this mixture into your wet ingredients. Beat until smooth.
4. Spread half of mixture on the bottom of the pan. Add peaches. Spread the rest of the mixture on top. Don't worry if there are holes.
5. Sprinkle cinnamon sugar on top and bake for 40 minutes or until golden brown *and* inserted toothpick comes out clean.

Books to Peruse

Speak, by Laurie Halse Anderson

The Covenant with Black America, by Tavis Smiley

Rich Dad, Poor Dad: What the Rich Teach Their Kids about Money-That the Poor and Middle Class Do Not!, by Robert T. Kiyosaki

Interview with Dave and Mary

Dave Curtis is a VISTA at Savanna Oaks Middle School in Verona and Mary Gutierrez is one of the three VISTAs at Parents Plus in Milwaukee.

Mary's Questions for Dave

Q: What would you like to be when you grow up?

A: When I grow up, I'd like to be someone who's had a lot of different experiences. I'm hoping to have had many different jobs and many traveling experiences. Someday I'd like to eventually settle down and find a job that I like. Maybe it'll be teaching.

Q: What would you change if you could?

A: I wish that an overwhelming majority of Americans had a solid foundation in the social sciences – sociology, anthropology, geography, political science, and history. If I could change anything in an instant, it would be that.

Q: What do you have passion about that drives you to give your all?

A: Get ready to roll your eyes. I don't have anything that makes me work harder mentally and physically than a game of Ultimate Frisbee with a worthy opponent.

Playing defense can push me to my most extreme physical capacities. I imagine that many read this and say "what a waste" or "why doesn't he get passionate about something that matters?" and with a nod and a smile, I'd just respond by saying that something I'm hoping to do is be able to apply that energy to other aspects of my life.

With Ultimate Frisbee, I'm participating in an activity where the objectives are very easy to understand, and effort can be directly applied and there are immediate results.

I think that with most things in life the objectives or the means of achieving your goals are not often as easy to comprehend. Maybe once the means to goals are easier to understand in other problems in life, it'll be easier to apply high levels of energy to them.



Q: What type of adjustments have you made, being a VISTA?

A: While some might argue that I'm still not very organized, I believe that I've become much more organized. Until I was a VISTA, I'd been able to keep mental track of 97% of everything that I had to do - so I never used a planner. Also, I think that I've had to become more outgoing and stepping outside of myself to get to know people at work.

Q: Would you do this type of work again?

A: While I don't think that I will be a VISTA for a third year, I could see myself doing something with schools, students, and/or community development again. I hope that in whatever I do that I can keep the same focus with me in making sure that people in poverty have the same opportunities and choices as everyone else.

Q: What type of food do you like?

A: From our time at conferences Emily and Morgana know that I'll eat pretty much anything. I really like Italian food them most, especially lasagna and pizza.

Q: When someone says 'poverty' what comes to mind?

A: The first visual image is of a single mom of three children living in a shack in a village of some developing nation. Then, I think of a web-poverty in the middle with the many different factors of poverty branching out.

Q: Will you be staying in Madison after your assignment is over?

A: I don't know where I'll be or what I'll be doing after November.

Q: Have you learned anything about different cultures?

A: I've learned the most about the Hmong. I've learned that there are different dialects and groups of Hmong (like Green and White), and I've learned about their journey here. Hmong language is pretty interesting because it's a tonal language. You can say several different words that would sound almost exactly the same in English. The only difference is the tone or pitch.

Dave's Questions for Mary

Q: Who do you consider to be the most important person who ever lived?

A: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Q: Why?

A: I would have to say I respect what he stood for: freedom and peace. Which takes me to the Hispanic culture and what we are fighting for now.

Q: What is your favorite island?

A: Fantasy Island, from T.V.

Q: I think I remember you saying that you've lived in many places before. What place do you miss the most?

A: I would have to say Washington; I guess because my heart is there.

Q: What is your favorite genre of music and your favorite band or group?

A: BOB MARLEY!!!

Q: If you could be any bird, what would you be and why?

A: I would like to be an eagle because they soar alone.

Q: Do you believe in extra-terrestrials?

A: NO! NO!

Q: Do you watch movies? If so, what's the best one you've seen in the past year?

A: Yes, *Narnia* was great.

Q: What is your favorite book?

A: The word, the *Bible*.

Q: What fruit or vegetable do you like the least?

A: Cauliflower!

